

FAITH WALK

I Delayed writing about how I came to be where I am in my faith because I was trying to discern the moment of epiphany that you hear so much about people experiencing. In my case, there was no particular defining moment but rather a faith walk that continued to pull me closer and closer to knowing God as my creator and Jesus Christ as my lord and savior.

My parents used to send me to Hockey camp in Canada at a very young age where hockey sticks grew on trees and I began to accelerate at the sport quickly. Because I grew up in NJ before team USA won the Gold, the majority of students I attended public school with had never heard of the sport.. That fact was the motivating force for my transfer to Catholic school. The catholic schools had hockey teams. So Hockey brought me to that place. At the time, It was taller than faith even without skates on. Hockey was my life. Theology class with the Franciscan monks at Paramus Catholic was just a necessary penalty box requirement before I got to step on the ice. From as early as I can remember, my mother told me to answer questions regarding my faith with the response that I was “non sectarian”. I didn’t even know what that meant, but I respectfully complied. Both of my parents grew up Catholic and decided that they were not going to force a religion on their children. My grandfather would sometimes take me to church only on the holidays and my neighborhood friends were Jewish, Phillipino, Korean and Italian, so there was not a lot of pressure there. If the seeds of faith were planted back in catholic school, I was not to realize it until much later. I received a full scholarship to a prep school in New England where hockey was king and education was second with Faith far behind. It was there that I really got a taste of what interested me. I started to push the performance envelope on the ice with a pumped up pre game lap around the goal with a stuffed monkey around my neck as the home crowd cheered before the big games. That pre game crowd pleaser became more exciting to me then the game itself, Unless I would have success lining an opponent up for a big hit at center ice that sent helmets flying and fans cheering. Our Irish Catholic goalie from the south side of Boston insisted that in order to win those games we had to sing “our Father” in the locker room and he volunteered me. Now I was vocalizing the Lords prayer for a locker room full of hockey hoodlums. Finally, I joined a band and started performing without blades on my feet. Accolades from hockey were good, but music and stage performance garnered more and more of my attention. I even acted in the school plays. College continued the trend. Being the lead singer in the popular band at a liberal arts college in Chicago was not the fertile environment for Christian growth either. Debauchery was much easier to cultivate on that stage, and so it would not further my walk in faith but there were many mornings I thought it would not be possible to still be alive without the help of a divine power. Drunkenness would carry me down to the bottom of a steep ravine until morning, and tumbling down concrete stairs or waking up with strangers. I started to realize that I was not the one responsible for my survival. After graduation, I stayed to lead a rock band that was beginning to gain some momentum in the Chicago circuit performing for peanuts and fast on our way to cashews. When the combined egos exceeded one bands capacity, the unit imploded. I regrouped with Robin Ruzan, a childhood friend and neighbor from NJ who also headed westward to pursue her dreams after graduation. She was living on Division street in an apartment with two sisters, Faith and Jill Solloway.

Faith was her name and not her way of life, but at least I began to hear the word Faith again. She was the musical director at Second City Chicago. Robin and I had known each other like brother and sister since grade school and so sleeping in the same bed in a crowded apartment was not a problem until she started dating Michael Myers who had transferred from Second City Canada. In the name of love or contemporary dating practices, shortly there after, I was understandably kicked to the love seat off the kitchen. I stumbled into that kitchen early one morning with a dry desert in my mouth searching for a quench only to interrupt the writing of Wayne's World on a kitchen table full of yet to be organized note cards. This was well before Mike made his way to Saturday Night Live. I met my wife around that same week that Robin and Mike met in Chicago. Later, us NJ transplants eventually married the people we met at that time together in the Windy City. I remember watching Mike's movie years later with my wife Edie. Together we did wonder if the idiocy of my own undeveloped character did not make its way into the inspiration of any of those Wayne's World Characters.

It was Robin who got me my first job out of college working for a modeling agency in the city. We acted in some industrial films together. There were a couple of print jobs, and a runway or two, but the majority of busy work was walking around in the surrounding malls spraying people with nose hair removing, eye burning perfumes that neither of us liked. One time they had me escorting Susan Luchi out of the limo down the red carpet and into the mall for a promotional stint regarding her awful new fragrance. After she signed some autographs and took off, I remained behind for hours like a tuxedoed skunk spraying every woman who walked by. That is actually how I met my wife. I guess you can say I sprayed her and she's never been the same since. We were in agreement about the offensive nature of the fragrance, and it turns out that we agreed on many other levels but not all. My wife had studied the bible in the recent years leading up to our meeting and would share and act upon things that she knew to be correct. I believe one of my first tough lessons was the parting with playboy magazine an old friend I inherited from my father and my father's father that engaged my younger years. She unabashedly let me know that they had no place in our relationship. *"When perfection comes, the imperfect disappears, When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child, when I became a man I put childish ways behind me."* Even if it took a nudge.

1 Cor. 13:11-12

My wife and I were not yet married at that time, but I honored her.

It was then through the modeling agency that I met another man who would influence my growth in that direction. The agency placed us with photographers to work with on growing our portfolio and I became friendly with a phenomenal young photographer named Craig Litton. His attitude was uplifting and inspirational. I began to request photo shoots that involved him. He was around my age and he would read the bible in his spare time. The curiosity I had for his pre occupation in the book would prompt my questions and lead to what were my first voluntary bible lessons. I was very slowly moving in the right direction.

Years later we met an artist manager who was interested in managing my music career (If I agreed to move back to the NY, NJ area). I did and Edie soon followed. We were married shortly there after. In Paramus NJ, my first commercial recording studio was opened. Having no business experience at all found me prepared in recording tools and experience but without a client base or the knowledge of how to acquire one.

Some how, I had aligned my self with the proprietors of Big Blue Meenie a recording studio in Jersey City that was formerly owned by Madonna.

They were recording mostly Hard core rock and alternative bands and started to refer the musical antithesis to me. We suddenly became the recording facility with a Christian clientele.

Yes, The Lord works in mysterious ways. Now I was an engineer and editor listening over and over to lyrics about a greater love and redemption. Those melodies would play in my head even after the equipment had been turned off, and those lyrics were stuck to them like tightly wound hockey tape. Suddenly the music I used to live by from the Rolling Stones, the doors and Black Sabbath began to almost hurt my ears. We were living in Paramus Nj at the time in the home I had grown up in. It was a two family home that was jointly owned by my parents and my fathers sister. My parents had moved to Georgia and offered us the home. Shortly after our decorative finishing touches we finished paying the mortgage and His sister forced a sale as the deed could not be separated. She was a litigious woman with a strong faith in the almighty dollar and the legal profession and so with a son and a new daughter, we were forced to move.